

Federal Child and Family Service Review (CFSR)

What is the CFSR?

The federal Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) is the new way the federal Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) is using to:

- Determine what is actually happening to children and families served by the child welfare system
- Assist states to enhance their capacity to help children and families achieve positive outcomes

Over a 4-year period, DHHS will conduct a review in every state.

CFSR Focus

The Child and Family Service Review focuses on 3 broad outcomes for children and families, as well as critical aspects of the child welfare system that contribute to positive outcomes.

- Outcomes – Safety, Permanency, and Child and Family Well-Being
 - Critical aspects of the child welfare system
 - Child welfare information system
 - Case review system, including case planning and court reviews
 - Quality assurance system
 - Training for DHS and provider staff, foster and adoptive parents
 - Array of child welfare services
 - DHS responsiveness to and collaboration with the community
 - Foster and adoptive family recruitment and licensing/approval
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Review Process

There are 3 phases to the CFSR process.

- Statewide self-assessment of Iowa's child welfare system (completed in February 2003)
 - Onsite review (held the week of May 19, 2003)
 - Plan for improvement (due 90 days after we receive final report)
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Statewide Self Assessment

While DHS is the lead agency, the statewide self-assessment involved a wide range of key stakeholders in the following activities.

- Analyzing what the data tells us about how children and families fare in our child welfare system
- Gathering input and feedback from the children and families we serve and key stakeholders, including staff, providers, Juvenile Court, advocates, etc.
- Identifying our strengths
- Identifying areas where we need to improve

Federal Child and Family Service Review (CFSR), Continued

On-Site Review During the on-site review phase, a team of federal and state staff conducted the review in 3 communities in Iowa – Polk County, Woodbury County, and Linn County). Their visit involved:

- In-depth review of a sample of cases, including interviews with family members and providers
- Interviews with department staff and child welfare partners

Federal and state staff also interviewed department staff and key child welfare partners at the state level.

Plan to Improve After the state receives a copy of the final report from the federal Department of Health and Human Services, the state develops a Program Improvement Plan.

- The program improvement plan is designed to support continuous quality improvement.
- Program improvements should build on strengths identified during the statewide self-assessment phase.

Like the statewide self-assessment, the program improvement phase involves DHS, the Juvenile Court, and key stakeholders.

How are we doing on the federal outcomes? One of the ways the federal government measures state performance on the safety and permanency outcomes is by comparing state data on specific indicators to national standards. Based on our most recent data,

- Iowa exceeds the national standard on timeliness for reuniting children with their families, placement stability for children in foster care, and timeliness for finalizing adoptions of children who cannot return home.
- Iowa will need to improve on our performance on reoccurrence of abuse and neglect, abuse in out-of-home care, and re-entry into care for children who return home from foster care.

CFSR as an opportunity to improve our system CFSR provides an opportunity for DHS, the Juvenile Court, providers and stakeholders to:

- Renew our emphasis on positive outcomes for children and families
- Recognize and appreciate the strengths in our system
- Build on our strengths and focus our energies on areas we need to improve